



*Office of Mayor Lawrence J.  
Morrissey*

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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### **IDOT TO AWARD \$4.2 MILLION TO MORGAN STREET BRIDGE PROJECT**

ROCKFORD, IL: July 17, 2011: State of Illinois Secretary of Transportation, Ann Schneider, informed Rockford Mayor Larry Morrissey that the State will provide \$4,261,907.00 to help fill the funding shortfall for the construction and engineering required for the Morgan Street Bridge replacement project.

Governor Quinn's standing commitment to grow Rockford's economy through capital improvements was a significant factor in IDOT's pledge of support to fill the \$5 million dollar gap.

"My administration is committed to investing in vital infrastructure that will grow Rockford's economy and create jobs," said Governor Quinn. "The Morgan Street bridge project will improve local transportation and make Rockford an even better place to live and work."

The City of Rockford made the request to IDOT for additional assistance in funding Morgan Street Bridge just as the State agency was going through a tenuous budget approval process. Mayor Larry Morrissey worked directly with Governor Quinn to appeal for the extra funding.

"I commend the Governor's office and IDOT for their hard work to find the significant budget dollars to get this project started now," stated Mayor Morrissey. "They understood from the start the importance of this bridge to our city."

The State's additional financial support allows the Morgan Street Project to move forward and is slated for Monday's Finance & Personnel committee.

"I am confident that the City Council will support the additional funding necessary to start this project. The Council has supported this project over many years and multiple mayoral administrations. This is not just about a new bridge, this is about creating a lot of jobs, connecting our neighborhoods to our riverfront, and building an iconic and positive addition to our skyline."

The bridge was originally constructed in 1916 with several subsequent upgrades and repairs. The new bridge is a steel, tied arch design that will span 370 feet across the Rock River. The structure will support a multi-use path on the south side and a sidewalk on the north side. One of the unique aspects of the bridge is that the piers will be located on each side of the river, eliminating the need for piers within the river.

The project will include the complete reconstruction of College Avenue (from Kishwaukee Street to the new bridge approach), and Morgan Street (from South Main Street to the new bridge approach), including a single-lane roundabout at the College and Seminary Street intersection. The project will connect to a more extensive multi-use path system that will open up significant sections of the Rock River for recreational purposes.

"This project has been in development for 12 years," stated Patrick Zuroske, Capital Program Manager for the City. "There are so many people through the southwest side, actually, people throughout the entire community that have a tremendous amount of sweat equity into the project. It is gratifying to finally get to the point of construction and deliver a project of quality and distinction to the southwest side."

"I appreciate everyone's efforts to move the Morgan Street Project forward to construction," stated Brad Long, President of the Northwestern Illinois Building Trades. "From Mayor Morrissey's efforts to that of Governor Quinn providing this additional funding to allow the project to proceed, hundreds of local laborers who have been unemployed will be put to work because of this project. It is the shot in the arm we need."

IDOT is expected to formally award the project in the next two weeks. Construction should begin sometime in early August and will take the better part of three years, culminating in early 2014. The actual start date of construction will be dependent on final contract award, contractor mobilizations, and utility coordination.

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